

Keeping You Posted

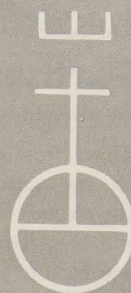
Property of
Graduate Theological Union

Newsletter of the United Church of Christ

MAY 10 1988

Vol. 23, No. 5, May 1988

ISSN 0361-8668



Council Addresses U.S. Appointments, Privacy Rights, Future with Disciples

Members of the UCC Executive Council have agreed that top officers of the church may speak out on nominees for appointive public office, such as Supreme Court justice.

The consensus came at the 43-member council's March meeting in St. Louis.

Though nonprofit organizations may not endorse or oppose candidates for elective office, the UCC previously had no policy about nominees for appointive office. Church officials had nonetheless spoken out on appointive candidates such as Judge Robert Bork, the 1987 Supreme Court nominee.

The council agreed with a study made by the Office for Church in Society that neither the Bible, nor the U.S. Constitution, nor regulations of the Internal Revenue Service prohibit churches from taking stands on candidates for appointive office. Jay Lintner prepared the study paper the council commended to national and conference offices of the church for distribution to local churches.

In other matters, the council:

- Heeded a 1987 General Synod resolution on the right to privacy and urged repeal of any Missouri law that could lead to "the invasion of privacy of consenting adults." The GS 16 resolution said UCC bod-

ies "meeting in states with so-called 'sodomy laws' should publicly witness to the right to privacy." The council asked its chairperson and the UCC president to convey its position in letters to state officials. Letters were sent to officials in both Missouri and New York State.

- Commended to the church "for study and response" a "proposed vision statement" for the UCC-Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) partnership. Meeting jointly, the council and its Disciples counterpart agreed that the partnership is "an expression of visible unity" that someday will result in mutual recognition of members and ordained ministers, "common decision-making" and other signs of "full communion." GS 17 and the Disciples' General Assembly will consider the statement in 1989.

- Voted a policy offering support for non-violent acts of civil disobedience by some 15 employees in the UCC executive offices. Under the policy, if they commit civil disobedience under certain conditions, they will be eligible for "time-off with pay for a reasonable period" and their actions will not jeopardize their jobs. Other UCC bodies must set their own employee policies; OCIS adopted a similar policy in 1986.

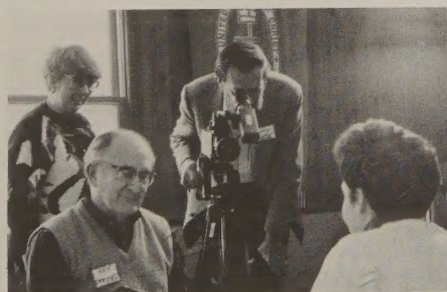
UCC Sponsors Spiritual Renewal Events

The first of eight national UCC spiritual renewal workshops, sponsored by the Office of Communication, was held at a Missouri Conference camp, Mar. 18-20.

Sixteen Missouri Conference churches and Eden Theological Seminary, participated in the event funded by the Family Thank Offering.

"People discovered that their hunger for spiritual renewal was real and there were simple, easy things that can be done to launch the renewal," explained Eugene A. Schneider, deputy director of the Office of Communication. Participants examined disciplines ranging from silence and praying with scripture to biblical storytelling and clown ministries.

"This event was a powerful launch for the denomination's priority for spiritual renewal," declared Dennis Lindberg, conference chair for the priority.



Office of Communication director, Dr. Beverly J. Chain, instructs workshop participants in videotaping their spiritual histories.

CRJ Seeks Probe In North Carolina Racial Incidents

Federal investigations are needed to address routine violence against Native and African Americans in Robeson County, NC, said Commission for Racial Justice commissioners meeting in New York in March.

The UCC body also passed resolutions calling on the U.S. to end all relations with nations, including Columbia and Panama, involved in illegal drug trade.

Concerning Robeson County, CRJ called for a U.S. Justice Department investigation of the murder of attorney Julian Pierce, an Indian candidate for Superior Court judge in May 3 elections. CRJ also called for a congressional probe of county racism. Southern Conference minister Rollin Russell and other UCC leaders wired similar requests to Congress. CRJ executive director Benjamin F. Chavis helped lead a statewide march for justice after the murder.

Local residents say racism and government corruption are factors in numerous unsolved murders of Native and African Americans, and allege county officials are involved in illegal drug trafficking. In Feb. two Indian leaders dramatized community frustrations by occupying the local newspaper's offices.

Indians have been charged in Pierce's murder but many people doubt the crime was solely coincidental, as it occurred just weeks before elections. The murder leaves J. Freeman Britt, the county district attorney known for obtaining a record number of death penalties for minority defendants, uncontested in the judgeship race. People also are suspicious of one of the suspect's alleged suicide.

In other actions, CRJ reiterated its call for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa by voting support for the Dellums-Cranston bill and called on the UC Board for World Ministries to review the use of church funds in Angola. A UCC delegation, including CRJ and World Board officials, is currently meeting with partner churches in Angola and other nations subject to South African attacks.

What's Inside
First Urban American Indian
Church Dedicated, page 4

Disciples Minister
Speaks On Partnership
With UCC, page 2

World Board Staff Testifies
At Congressional Hearings
On South Africa, page 4

Partnership Offers New Means of Unity

By Michael Kinnamon

Thirty years is a short time in the history of the one church of Jesus Christ. But, as far as the ecumenical movement is concerned, momentous changes have occurred since the UCC was born in 1957.

This period has witnessed greater theological convergence, especially at the international level, than earlier generations of ecumenists would have dreamed possible. Documents such as the World Council of Churches' *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* show that traditions as different as Catholic and Baptist can speak in common on substantive issues, which, while not resulting in immediate fellowship, at least indicates that many traditionally divisive questions can now be set aside.

At the same time, problems, as well as blessings, of "organic union" have become more apparent. United churches often speak of the frustrating tendency to focus on structure questions when new issues of peace and justice scream for attention. Some of these churches also say internal divisiveness continues because the biggest obstacle to genuine

unity—fear of losing a familiar sense of identity—may not have been adequately addressed at the time of union. And, there is always the danger of united churches, forgetting the imperative to be uniting churches, will become no more "ecumenical" than their predecessor denominations.

Still, none of this alters Christ's command that his followers manifest the gift of unity, living across the barriers of the world as a sign of God's purpose. But churches ask if there aren't different ways of pursuing this ecumenical vision.

The UCC-Disciples of Christ "partnership," celebrated this month, is one such attempt to do a new thing. The national partnership committee has made at least three assumptions or affirmations which reflect the changing ecumenical picture.

1. Our partnership is set within the context of the whole ecumenical movement and the theological convergence mentioned above. As a result, we start with the assumption (grown out of decades of ecumenical conversations and trust building) that we are

already one in faith. Differences in sacraments, ministry, mission or worship should therefore, be understood as the differences of partners—diversities to be respected. This certainly does not preclude common growth, but we are not saying to each other, "Until you change in this or that direction, we cannot have deeper fellowship."

2. Partnership affirms that it is possible to realize a relationship of tangible closeness while still preserving separate structures and identities. It is not necessary to achieve a single understanding of such things as baptism.

3. Our goal is not to preserve or recover the past, though we should learn from it, but to be more fully the church God wills. Thus, instead of negotiating agreements, we can use our time and energy envisioning what we are called to become. Partnership is a substantiated joyful commitment to do just that.

The future of our partnership is truly open-ended, allowing us, as trust grows "from the bottom up," to find new ways of expressing our special relationship within the Christian family. Partnership Sunday, celebrated this month, is one step in that journey together.

Dr. Michael Kinnamon, an ordained Disciples minister recently appointed Dean of Lexington Theological Seminary, serves on the Ecumenical Partnership Committee.

Priorities Report

Spiritual Renewal

People from 14 UCC churches and a Disciples congregation met at **Ivanhoe UCC**, Raytown, MO, for a day of workshops on using the concept of healing in situations with families and individuals. Local chaplains, including the UCC's Dane Sommer of Kansas City's Mercy Hospital, led workshops on illness, guilt, grief and parent-teen relationships. A worship service used the Order for Healing for Congregational Use from *Book of Worship*. The Missouri Conference's **Western Association** and Kansas-Oklahoma's **Eastern Association** were sponsors.

Youth/Young Adult Ministries

Mainline Protestants, Evangelicals, Jews and Catholics were among the panelists and leaders at a teen pregnancy workshop at **Mayflower Community Congregational UCC**, Minneapolis. Participants, including ministers, church educators and community group members, compared 10 curricula and heard a range of opinions on preventing teen pregnancy. The Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches sponsored the event.

Justice and Peace

Zion UCC, South Bend, IN, has used recent Just Peace offerings to help a local child perform in the Soviet tour of the play "Peace

Child"; to display a banner during South Bend's yearly Peace is Possible Festival; to support West Lafayette's Conner Center for U.S./U.S.S.R. Relations, and to buy a copy of the **Iowa Conference's** peace bibliography for the church library.

The Homeless Poor

Hosting a Red Cross emergency shelter led members of **United Christian Church**, Levittown, PA, to form an interfaith organization to create affordable housing for people with low and moderate incomes. The church also raised grants and donations to fund about 100 hours of crisis-intervention counseling for shelter clients, done by the staff of the church's Human Growth Center.

OBITUARIES

THELMA G. BALLOU, 97, retired educational missionary to China with the UC Board for World Ministries, died on Feb. 29 at the Stratton House Nursing Home in Townsend, VT. Mrs. Ballou served with her late husband, Earle, in Tientsin, Peking, and Shanghai from 1916-1959.

MARY THOMAS, 94, former UCBWM missionary to Angola, died on Mar. 22 at the Howard Good Samaritan Center in Howard, SD. She served as a nurse in Bailundo and Dondi from 1928-1960.

RECOMMENDED

HOSPICE RESOURCE MANUEL FOR LOCAL CHURCHES, edited by John W. Abbott, helps church people examine the biblical/theological basis for hospice care. The book suggests ways congregations can work ecumenically and with health care coalitions to establish hospices and advocate for increased coverage of hospice care in their communities. \$9.95, The Pilgrim Press, 132 W. 31 St., New York, NY 10001.

UC Scene

ADDIE LUTHER, a layleader at **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL UCC** of ASHEBORO, NC, won one of three 1987 Nancy Susan Reynolds awards for community and state leadership. Mrs. Luther is well-known locally for 30 years of advocacy for African American civil rights. Her \$25,000 award will be used to renovate a vacant school building and open a day care center to meet the needs of a "large group of youngsters not being served at all," she says. Mrs. Luther was the first laywoman to represent the UCC in a delegate exchange program with partner churches in Germany in 1983. "I was campaigning in churches for women's rights. Until I went on the exchange they had always seen clergymen," she said.

The Executive Council thanks you for your many suggestions of concerns to be considered in selecting UCC Priorities. The Executive Council has authorized twelve possible Proposed Priorities for further testing from more than seventy suggested. These twelve must be reduced to six from which General Synod may select up to three in June 1989. Will you participate in helping to narrow the field by sending in the coupon below by Sept. 1, 1988? Your suggestions are most welcome.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Including worship centered and intergenerational alternatives to traditional forms for use in a variety of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural settings and environments, and intended for the transformation of individuals.

CHURCH GROWTH AND EVANGELISM

Training for discipleship capable of attracting attention and loyalty of local church members and challenging them to share their faith and to serve human needs in the world.

ELDERLY

Helping church and society work on such problems as housing, jobs, accessible facilities and public attitudes with recognition of the increasing median age of church people.

ENDING SEXUAL AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Providing ministry to persons, families, and society caught up in child and spouse abuse.

FAMILY LIFE AND MINISTRY

Including support for such family relationships as single-

parent families, nuclear families and individuals within the wider church-family, especially younger families.

IDENTITY

Helping members of local churches to identify with the life and mission of the United Church of Christ, moving beyond the separate parts of our history—Congregational, Christian, Evangelical and Reformed—to a genuine celebration of unity with diversity in the United Church of Christ.

LOCAL CHURCH

Including development of a personalized program of relationships that will help local church members to feel a part of the Christian mission in and to the world, also help national church leadership keep in touch with priorities of local church life.

JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Extending and expanding the Justice and Peace Priority to include concern for ecology and for the unity of God's whole creation along with justice and world peace as part of our Christian stewardship.

POVERTY, WEALTH, AND THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD'S ECONOMY

Giving substance to the Proposed Pronouncement on Christian Faith and Economic Life and continuing theological dialogue and spiritual growth in outreach to the poor and disadvantaged of our world.

SPIRITUAL RENEWAL

Deepening and continuing the Spiritual Renewal Priority by the renewal of individual church members, congregations, and the wider United Church of Christ.

THEOLOGY

Emphasizing theological education, especially through our closely-related seminaries, and seeking to establish a distinctive theological identity for the United Church of Christ.

UNDERSTANDING AND ADDRESSING PROBLEMS IN A PLURALISTIC SOCIETY

Helping congregations come to terms with the reality of pluralism in today's world and identifying the fact that, like the wider society, the church's racial and cultural pluralism needs a faithful and graceful response.

TO: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, 105 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016

I recommend the following three concerns be commended to General Synod Seventeen for consideration as possible U.C.C. priorities:

1. _____ Reason: _____

Suggested changes: _____

2. _____ Reason: _____

Suggested changes: _____

3. _____ Reason: _____

Suggested changes: _____

Please check: ☐ individual ☐ group or official board of local church ☐ group or board of association or conference ☐ staff or board of national instrumentality or body

AGAIN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT!

Women's Center Helps Launch Ecumenical Women's Decade

The UCC Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society's transition team, meeting in Mar. in St. Louis, endorsed the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity with Women. CCW will use a grant of \$10,000 from the UCC Office for Church in Society's Just Peace Offering to implement this effort.

In accordance with a General Synod 16 request, the CCW team also opposed a so-called "sodomy law" in Missouri. The action echoed an earlier Executive Council vote. (See article on p. 1). CCW also selected, "Freed to Journey: Challenged to Witness" as theme for the UCC's first women's assembly, July 29-Aug. 1 in Bloomington, IN.

World Board Supports Panama Relief Effort

UC Board for World Ministries urges churches to aid Panama by sending money to the National Council of Churches' Division of Church World Service. The funds, which are needed to buy food and other supplies, will be distributed by indigenous churches in Panama. UCBWM also joins the NCC in asking church members to voice opposition to U.S. military intervention in Panama to U.S. congressional representatives.

1988 Election Issues Resource Packet Available

An eight-piece resource packet designed to help churches raise justice and peace issues in the upcoming elections is available from the UCC Office for Church in Society. The packet, prepared by the Washington, DC-based interfaith coalition, includes a brochure on citizenship and faith and background pieces on hunger and poverty, employment, Central America, southern Africa and arms control. It also includes how-to pieces on setting up public issues forums with candidates and working with the media.

Contact UCC-OCIS at 110 Maryland Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20002, 202-543-1517.

Smock Testifies Before U.S. House Africa Subcommittee

Audrey Chapman Smock, world issues secretary for the UC Board for World Ministries, reiterated church calls for comprehensive South African sanctions during Mar. congressional hearings. She chairs the National Council of Churches' human rights committee and spoke on behalf of that ecumenical organization.

Her testimony hinged on appeals for full sanctions from South African churches, many of whose members have been detained and tortured. Quoting the South African Council of Churches, Dr. Smock told Congress that if the U.S. could not support the struggle against apartheid, the least it could do is stop "propping" it up. SACC urges the international community to commence "constructive disengagement."

Regarding corporate efforts to ease apartheid via programs for blacks, she cited a study that showed U.S. firms paying South Africa 69 times more in taxes than their donations under the Sullivan Principles.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Marriage and the family are the subjects of upcoming meetings.

A National UCC Marriage Enrichment Training Event will be held July 19-24 at the Schoenstatt Retreat Center in Waukesha, WI near Milwaukee. Sponsors are the UC Board for Homeland Ministries and the Wisconsin Conference. Contact Faith Johnson at UCBHM, 132 W. 31st St., New York, NY 10001, 212-239-8700.

"Bridging Our Differences and Sowing the Common Ground," a 1988 Summer Institute on Peace and Justice, will be held June 20-24 at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis. The role of family, school and the church in peace work will be examined. Cost is \$100 for five days, \$75 for Wed.-Fri., \$50 for Mon.-Tues. Contact the Institute for Peace and Justice, 4144 Lindell, #122, St. Louis, MO 63108, 314-533-4445.

PERSONNEL CHANGES

LESLIE CAROLE TAYLOR is the UCC Coordinating Center for Women in Church and Society's new associate for constituency and program development, effective June 1. Ms. Taylor, to graduate from Chicago Theological Seminary in June, will be based in CCW's New York City office.

MARILYN MOORE is secretary for racial and social justice programs for the UC Board for Homeland Ministries, a newly created position. As such, she develops and coordinates the board's strategies, programs and resources related to emerging and unresolved issues of racial and social justice in U.S. society.

JAMES SMITH, Jr., replaces Joseph McMillan, Jr., as UCBHM's secretary for higher education relationships. Previously, Mr. Smith was the board's coordinator of church-college relationships.



W. Evan Golder

About 200 people gather at All-Nations Indian UCC in Minneapolis, MN for the church's dedication on Apr. 10. Harry Stroessner, pastor, speaks at the UCC's first urban Native American church.

Keeping You Posted

P.O. Box 346
Kutztown, PA 19530

Second Class Postage
paid at New York, NY
and additional mailing
offices.

GRADUATE THEOL UNION
LIBRARY
2400 RIDGE ROAD
BERKELEY

AU 111

CA 94709